United Nations S 2016/916

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 November 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 28 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We have sent you numerous letters in the past regarding Israel's refusal to comply with the authoritative international resolutions that require it to withdraw from all of the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, and also regarding Israel's persistent violations of international law and the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. On instructions from my Government, I now write in order to transmit the following information:

Israel, the occupying Power, is planning to take control of hundreds of *dunams* of land in order to create a nature reserve to be known as the Hermon Reserve in and around the Jabal al-Shaykh area, in the north-west of the occupied Syrian Golan. The so-called District Planning Committee has deposited with the occupying Power a detailed planning map spanning 82,000 *dunams*. The plan was published in the official gazette on 13 July 2016 under No. 27760-/. The proposed area impinges on the boundaries of the occupied town of Majdal Shams and some of the boundaries of the occupied village of Ayn Qunyah. As a result, some 7,000 *dunams* of land belonging to Majdal Shams, to the north and west of the town, will be seized. The town will be completely surrounded, except to the south, which borders the Sakrah area and agricultural land. By abutting the boundaries of Majdal Shams, the proposed area expands the housing restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities. The town will thus be denied any possible future expansion to the north or west in order to meet the housing needs arising from the demographic growth of its inhabitants, who are Syrian citizens living under occupation. For some 15 years, the Majdal Shams Waqf Commission has been working to allocate construction plots among the town's inhabitants, and it has recently allocated some 750 such plots. However, the proposed reserve will swallow up most of those plots of land, except for some 60 plots that are located within the occupied town of Majdal Shams. Most of the plots that have been allocated among Syrian civilians will thus be seized.

The proposed reserve imposes a siege on the town of Majdal Shams and prevents any future expansion in response to the residents' needs. It does, however, leave the way open for the settlement of Neve Atif, which was built on the remains of the Syrian village of Jabatha al-Zayt, whose inhabitants were displaced in 1967,

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and for the settlement of Nimrod, which was built on land belonging to the villages of Jabatha al-Zayt and Majdal Shams.

The Hermon Reserve project, which aims to seize land and expand settlements, will have grave repercussions for the inhabitants of the occupied town of Majdal Shams. It will limit the town's expansion and hinder its development and prosperity. It also undermines all of the promises made to the inhabitants in recent years by various authorities and local councils, which agreed that Syrian villages could expand and new neighbourhoods could be created in order to meet the needs of the Syrian inhabitants and comply with global best practices.

Israeli occupation authorities demolish a house in the occupied town of Majdal Shams

Without warning, the Israeli occupation authorities have demolished a house belonging to Mr. Bassam Ibrahim in the occupied town of Majdal Shams. International law prohibits the occupation authorities from encroaching on the property of the people of the occupied Golan, which is Arab Syrian land. The occupation authorities deployed hundreds of heavily-armed soldiers, along with heavy machinery, to encircle the town and prevent any response on the inhabitants, who were in their fields harvesting apples at the time.

Israeli occupation authorities issue a second decision concerning an administrative demolition

After deciding one month ago to destroy the home of Mr. Bassam Ibrahim, the Israeli occupation authorities have now issued a decision to demolish the home of Mr. Jad Burayk. The decision has been signed by Chairman Amos of the so-called Committee for the New Regulation, who was appointed by the Israeli authorities in the occupied Golan. The pretext was that the house had been built on agricultural land without planning permission. However, the house is in fact located on land belonging to the municipality of the occupied town of Majdal Shams, within the recognized territory of the Majdal Shams Waqf.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to take swift action and bring an immediate end to Israel's violations; pressure Israel to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981); and prevail on Israel to withdraw from all of the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative